

## The Civics Assessment

The NAEP civics assessment encompasses three interrelated components: civics knowledge, intellectual and participatory skills, and civic dispositions. The knowledge component of the assessment is expressed in five fundamental questions:

- What are civic life, politics, and government?
- What are the foundations of the American political system?
- How does the government established by the Constitution embody the purposes, values, and principles of American democracy?
- What is the relationship of the United States to other nations and to world affairs?
- What are the roles of citizens in American democracy?

The NAEP civics assessment is also designed to measure the intellectual and participatory skills students need to face the challenges of public life in a constitutional democracy. Central among these are the abilities to describe, explain, and analyze information and arguments, and to evaluate, take, and defend positions on public issues. The third area of the assessment, civic dispositions and participatory skills, refers to the rights and responsibilities of citizens as members of society.

The assessment is made up of multiple-choice, short constructed-response, and extended constructed-response questions. The constructed-response questions make up approximately 40 percent of the assessment time. For more information regarding the civics assessment framework please visit <http://nagb.org>.

### ***NAEP Civics Framework Distribution of Exercise Pool Across Areas of Civic Knowledge***

<b>Grade</b>	Civic life, politics, and government	Foundations of the American political system	The Constitution and the purposes, values, and principles of American democracy	Relationship of the United States to other nations and to world affairs	Roles of citizens in American democracy
8	15%	25%	25%	15%	20%

## The U.S. History Assessment

The assessment is organized around three concepts or dimensions: major themes of U.S. history, chronological periods of U.S. history, and ways of knowing and thinking about U.S. history. The themes and periods of U.S. history function as a matrix, with the assessment addressing the role of the themes across the periods.

### ***NAEP U.S. History Framework Distribution of Question Pool Across Historical Themes***

	Themes			
Grade	Change & Continuity in American Democracy	Gathering & Interactions of Peoples, Cultures, & Ideas	Economic & Technological Changes & Their Relation to Society, Ideas, & the Environment	Changing Role of America in the World
8	30%	30%	20%	20%

Eight chronological periods that overlap and vary in depth of coverage are included in the assessment:

- Beginnings to 1607;
- Colonization, settlement, and communities (1607 to 1763);
- The Revolution and the new nation (1763 to 1815);
- Expansion and reform (1801 to 1861);
- Crisis of the Union: Civil War and Reconstruction (1850 to 1877);
- The development of modern America (1865 to 1920);
- Modern America and the World Wars (1914 to 1945);
- Contemporary America (1945 to present).

Questions include multiple-choice, short constructed-response, and extended constructed-response formats. The cognitive dimension of historical thinking is measured by the inclusion of test questions divided between those measuring historical knowledge and perspective (35%) and those measuring historical analysis and interpretation (65%). Constructed-response questions make up approximately 50% of the assessment. Many questions in the assessment are based on visual or textual stimuli. At Grade 8, a portion of the assessment questions may be organized around a single historical issue. For more information regarding the U.S. history assessment framework please visit <http://nagb.org>.

## Civics and U.S. History Booklet Directions

In each of the next two sections, you will have 25 minutes to answer a series of questions about history or civics. You should think carefully about your answers, and you should use the entire 25 minutes to complete each section.

You will be asked to respond to several different types of questions. Some of the questions will require you to choose the best answer and fill in the oval for that answer in your booklet.

For other questions, you will be asked to write short answers on the blank lines provided in your booklet. Here is an example of a question that requires you to provide a short answer.

### Example 1

Who was Thomas Jefferson and why was he important? Try to identify two reasons.

*Jefferson was the third U.S. President. He was the main writer of the Declaration of Independence and he bought the Louisiana territory from France.*

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Also, you will be asked to answer other questions by writing longer, more detailed responses on a full page of blank lines. For example, here is a question that requires you to provide a longer answer.

### Example 2

Explain three reasons why the early English settlers of New England left home to journey to North America.

The early English settlers left home for three reasons. Many of them wanted religious freedom because the King would not let them practice their faiths. Some were looking for more land or a way to make a better living because they were poor or hadn't inherited any land. Others hoped to set up a whole new society better than the one they left behind.

When you are asked to write your response be sure that your handwriting is clear. Think carefully about each question and make your answers as complete as possible, using as many lines as you need.

Finally, in some questions you may be asked to draw maps, graphs, charts, tables, or timelines.

If you finish before time is called, be sure to read your work again and change anything that you think will make your answers better.



## Sample Civics Questions

### Grade 8

1. The President of the United States is elected to a term of
  - Ⓐ 2 years
  - 4 years
  - Ⓒ 6 years
  - Ⓓ 8 years
2. In the United States, an individual citizen has the right to
  - Ⓐ Impeach the President
  - Vote for government officials
  - Ⓒ Make new laws
  - Ⓓ Collect taxes
3. The term “separation of powers” refers to
  - Ⓐ State powers and duties that are not given to the central government
  - Division of authority among the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of government
  - Ⓒ Division of the legislature into two houses
  - Ⓓ Creation of a national capital that is not a part of any State
4. According to the Bill of Rights, which of the following is NOT allowed?
  - Ⓐ A jury trial in criminal cases
  - Ⓑ The testimony of witnesses who are relatives of the accused
  - Ⓒ A trial held too soon after the defendant has been accused
  - Cruel and unusual punishment
5. United States Senators are a part of which branch of the government?
  - Legislative
  - Ⓑ Executive
  - Ⓒ Treasury Department
  - Ⓓ Supreme Court
6. The powers of Congress are set forth in the
  - Ⓐ Declaration of Independence
  - Ⓑ Articles of Confederation
  - Constitution of the United States
  - Ⓓ Bill of Rights



## Sample U.S. History Questions

### Grade 8

Questions 1–3 refer to the passage below.

We hold these truths to be self-evident: That all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. That, to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; that, whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute a new government.

—1776

1. The quotation is from the
  - Ⓐ Articles of Confederation
  - Ⓑ Constitution
  - Declaration of Independence
  - Ⓓ Missouri Compromise
2. The primary author of the document was
  - Ⓐ George Washington
  - Ⓑ John Marshall
  - Ⓒ Robert E. Lee
  - Thomas Jefferson
3. Explain why the document quoted was written.

It was written because the United States wanted to be free from laws made by King A/V "they" wrote it so we could be able to elect presidents and have our own rights as well. Then no one could take them away

4. Why was the invention of the steel plow important in United States history?

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Questions 5–6 refer to the first census of the United States, shown below.

FIRST CENSUS OF THE UNITED STATES 1790

District	Free White Males of 16 Years and Up	Free White Males Under 16 Years	Free White Females	All Other Free Persons	Slaves	Total
Vermont	22,435	22,323	40,505	255	16	85,539
New Hampshire	36,036	34,351	70,160	630	158	141,385
Maine	24,384	24,748	46,870	538	None	96,540
Massachusetts	95,453	87,289	190,582	5,463	None	378,787
Rhode Island	16,019	15,799	32,652	3,407	948	68,825
Connecticut	60,523	54,403	117,448	2,808	2,764	237,946
New York	83,700	78,122	152,320	4,654	21,324	340,120
New Jersey	45,251	41,416	83,287	2,762	11,423	184,139
Pennsylvania	110,783	106,948	206,363	6,537	3,737	434,373
Delaware	11,783	12,143	22,384	3,899	8,387	59,094
Maryland	55,915	51,339	101,395	8,043	103,036	319,723
Virginia	110,936	116,135	215,046	12,866	292,627	747,610
Kentucky	15,154	17,057	28,922	114	12,430	73,677
North Carolina	69,988	77,506	140,710	4,975	100,572	393,751
South Carolina	35,576	37,722	66,380	1,801	107,094	249,073
Georgia	13,103	14,044	25,739	393	29,264	82,548
Total Number of Inhabitants of the United States Exclusive of Other Territories	807,094	791,850	1,541,263	59,150	694,280	3,893,635

5. The information in the census could be used to answer which questions?

- Which state had the highest official population?
- Ⓐ How many people moved to the United States in 1790?
- Ⓑ Which state was the largest in area?
- Ⓒ How many more male than female slaves were there in 1790?

6. The census was important in 1790 because it

- Ⓐ helped determine which citizens were eligible to vote
- Ⓑ told people which states had the most members of American Indian nations
- Ⓒ told people whether men or women tended to live longer
- helped determine state representation in the House of Representatives



# Student Background Questionnaire

## General Directions for Grade 8

In the next two sections, you will be asked questions about yourself and your education. The choices for some questions will be written across the page as shown. Fill in the oval for the best answer.

### Example 1

	Never or hardly ever	Once or twice a month	Once or twice a week	Almost every day
1. How often do you watch movies on TV?	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input type="radio"/> C	<input type="radio"/> D

You should have filled in the oval below the answer that best tells how often you watch movies on TV.

The choices for some questions will be written down the page as shown. Now read Example 2 and indicate your answer.

### Example 2

2. Which event would you prefer to attend?
<input type="radio"/> A basketball game
<input type="radio"/> B car show
<input type="radio"/> C concert
<input type="radio"/> D play

Make your answer mark clear and dark in the oval. If you make a mistake or want to change your answer, be sure to completely erase any unwanted marks.

Do not go past the  sign at the end of each section until you are told to do so.

If you finish before time is called, go back and check your work on that section only. Use your time carefully. Do as much as you can in each section.





## Student Background Questionnaire

In this section, please tell us about yourself and your family. The section has 13 questions. Mark your answers in your booklet.

VB331330

1. Are you Hispanic or Latino? Fill in **one or more ovals**.

- ☐ Ⓐ No, I am not Hispanic or Latino.
- ☐ Ⓑ Yes, I am Mexican, Mexican American, or Chicano.
- ☐ Ⓒ Yes, I am Puerto Rican or Puerto Rican American.
- ☐ Ⓓ Yes, I am Cuban or Cuban American.
- ☐ Ⓔ Yes, I am from some other Hispanic or Latino background.

VB331331

2. Which of the following best describes you? Fill in **one or more ovals**.

- ☐ Ⓐ White
- ☐ Ⓑ Black or African American
- ☐ Ⓒ Asian
- ☐ Ⓓ American Indian or Alaska Native
- ☐ Ⓔ Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander

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GO ON TO THE NEXT PAGE

For the rest of the questions in this section, fill in only **one** oval for each question.

VB331333

3. Does your family get a newspaper at least four times a week?

☐ A Yes  
☐ B No  
☐ C I don't know.

VB331334

4. Does your family get any magazines regularly?

☐ A Yes  
☐ B No  
☐ C I don't know.

VB331335

5. About how many books are there in your home?

☐ A Few (0–10)  
☐ B Enough to fill one shelf (11–25)  
☐ C Enough to fill one bookcase (26–100)  
☐ D Enough to fill several bookcases (more than 100)

VB331336

6. Is there a computer at home that you use?

☐ A Yes  
☐ B No

VB331337

7. Is there an encyclopedia in your home? It could be a set of books, or it could be on the computer.

☐ A Yes  
☐ B No  
☐ C I don't know.

TB001101

8. About how many pages a day do you have to read in school and for homework?

☐ A 5 or fewer  
☐ B 6–10  
☐ C 11–15  
☐ D 16–20  
☐ E More than 20

VB331339

9. How often do you talk about things you have studied in school with someone in your family?

☐ A Never or hardly ever  
☐ B Once every few weeks  
☐ C About once a week  
☐ D Two or three times a week  
☐ E Every day

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VB331447

10. How many days were you absent from school in the last month?

- Ⓐ None
- Ⓑ 1 or 2 days
- Ⓒ 3 or 4 days
- Ⓓ 5 to 10 days
- Ⓔ More than 10 days

VB331451

13. How often do people in your home talk to each other in a language other than English?

- Ⓐ Never
- Ⓑ Once in a while
- Ⓒ About half of the time
- Ⓓ All or most of the time

VB330870

11. How far in school did your mother go?

- Ⓐ She did not finish high school.
- Ⓑ She graduated from high school.
- Ⓒ She had some education after high school.
- Ⓓ She graduated from college.
- Ⓔ I don't know.

VB330871

12. How far in school did your father go?

- Ⓐ He did not finish high school.
- Ⓑ He graduated from high school.
- Ⓒ He had some education after high school.
- Ⓓ He graduated from college.
- Ⓔ I don't know.



# Student Background Questionnaire

## Civics—Grade 8

This section has 9 questions. Mark your answers in your booklet. Fill in only **one** oval for each question.

VB594977

1. How often do you study social studies in school?

- ☐ Ⓐ Never or hardly ever
- ☐ Ⓑ Once or twice a month
- ☐ Ⓒ Once or twice a week
- ☐ Ⓓ Almost every day

ID100216

2. During this school year, have you studied any of the following topics? Fill in **one** oval on each line.

	Yes	No	I don't know
a. The United States Constitution	<input type="radio"/> Ⓐ	<input type="radio"/> Ⓑ	<input type="radio"/> Ⓒ
b. Congress	<input type="radio"/> Ⓐ	<input type="radio"/> Ⓑ	<input type="radio"/> Ⓒ
c. The President and the cabinet	<input type="radio"/> Ⓐ	<input type="radio"/> Ⓑ	<input type="radio"/> Ⓒ
d. How laws are made	<input type="radio"/> Ⓐ	<input type="radio"/> Ⓑ	<input type="radio"/> Ⓒ
e. The court system	<input type="radio"/> Ⓐ	<input type="radio"/> Ⓑ	<input type="radio"/> Ⓒ
f. Political parties, elections, and voting	<input type="radio"/> Ⓐ	<input type="radio"/> Ⓑ	<input type="radio"/> Ⓒ
g. State and local government	<input type="radio"/> Ⓐ	<input type="radio"/> Ⓑ	<input type="radio"/> Ⓒ
h. Other countries' governments	<input type="radio"/> Ⓐ	<input type="radio"/> Ⓑ	<input type="radio"/> Ⓒ
i. International organizations (such as the United Nations)	<input type="radio"/> Ⓐ	<input type="radio"/> Ⓑ	<input type="radio"/> Ⓒ

GO ON TO THE NEXT PAGE

ID100201

3. Do you do any of the following when you study social studies? Fill in **one** oval on each line.

	Yes	No	I don't know
a. Read from your textbook	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input type="radio"/> C
b. Memorize material you have read	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input type="radio"/> C
c. Read extra material not in your textbook (such as newspapers, magazines, maps, charts, or cartoons)	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input type="radio"/> C
d. Fill out worksheets	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input type="radio"/> C
e. Write reports	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input type="radio"/> C
f. Discuss current events	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input type="radio"/> C
g. Watch television shows, videos, or filmstrips in class	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input type="radio"/> C
h. Discuss television shows, videos, or filmstrips	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input type="radio"/> C
i. Take part in debates or panel discussions	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input type="radio"/> C
j. Take part in role-playing, mock trials, or dramas	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input type="radio"/> C
k. Write a letter to give your opinion or help solve a community problem	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input type="radio"/> C
l. Have visits from people in your community to learn about important events and ideas	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input type="radio"/> C

VB594978

4. This year in school, how often have you been asked to write long answers to questions or assignments that involved social studies?

- ☐ A Never
- ☐ B Once or twice this year
- ☐ C Once or twice a month
- ☐ D At least once a week

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VB594979

5. How often do you use computers at school for social studies?

- Ⓐ Never or hardly ever
- Ⓑ Once every few weeks
- Ⓒ About once a week
- Ⓓ Two or three times a week
- Ⓔ Every day

VB594981

6. When you study history or social studies, to what extent do you use computers to do research projects about social studies topics using a CD or the Internet? Include both work in class and homework assignments.

- Ⓐ Not at all
- Ⓑ Small extent
- Ⓒ Moderate extent
- Ⓓ Large extent

VB595182

7. How hard was this test compared to most other tests you have taken this year in school?

- Ⓐ Easier than other tests
- Ⓑ About as hard as other tests
- Ⓒ Harder than other tests
- Ⓓ Much harder than other tests

VC034559

8. How hard did you try on this test compared to how hard you tried on most other tests you have taken this year in school?

- Ⓐ Not as hard as on other tests
- Ⓑ About as hard as on other tests
- Ⓒ Harder than on other tests
- Ⓓ Much harder than on other tests

VB595184

9. How important was it to you to do well on this test?

- Ⓐ Not very important
- Ⓑ Somewhat important
- Ⓒ Important
- Ⓓ Very important



# Student Background Questionnaire

## U.S. History—Grade 8

This section has 10 questions. Mark your answers in your booklet. Fill in only **one** oval for each question.

LC000105

1. Did you take a United States history course in the following grades? Fill in **one** oval on each line.

	Yes	No	I don't know
a. 6th grade	<input type="radio"/> (A)	<input type="radio"/> (B)	<input type="radio"/> (C)
b. 7th grade	<input type="radio"/> (A)	<input type="radio"/> (B)	<input type="radio"/> (C)

WP00118

2. Are you taking a United States history course now?

- ☐ (A) Yes  
☐ (B) No

VB598171

3. Since the beginning of middle school or junior high school, how much have you studied the following periods of United States history? Fill in **one** oval on each line.

	Not at all	Some	A lot
a. The period before 1815: beginnings through the Revolution (e.g., colonization, settlement, revolution)	<input type="radio"/> (A)	<input type="radio"/> (B)	<input type="radio"/> (C)
b. The period between 1815 and 1865: the new nation through the Civil War (e.g., expansion, reform, crisis of the Union)	<input type="radio"/> (A)	<input type="radio"/> (B)	<input type="radio"/> (C)
c. The period between 1865 and 1945: the development of modern America (e.g., Reconstruction, industrial growth, United States role in world affairs, the Great Depression, the First and Second World Wars, immigration)	<input type="radio"/> (A)	<input type="radio"/> (B)	<input type="radio"/> (C)
d. The period between 1945 and the present: contemporary America (e.g., civil rights movement, women's rights movement, Korean and Vietnam wars, environmental movement)	<input type="radio"/> (A)	<input type="radio"/> (B)	<input type="radio"/> (C)

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VB598095

4. When you study history or social studies in school, how often do you do each of the following? Fill in **one** oval on each line.

	Never	A few times a year	Once or twice a month	Once or twice a week	About every day
a. Read material from a textbook	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input type="radio"/> C	<input type="radio"/> D	<input type="radio"/> E
b. Read extra material not in the regular textbook (e.g., biographies or historical stories)	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input type="radio"/> C	<input type="radio"/> D	<input type="radio"/> E
c. Use letters, diaries, or essays written by historical people	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input type="radio"/> C	<input type="radio"/> D	<input type="radio"/> E
d. Discuss the material studied	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input type="radio"/> C	<input type="radio"/> D	<input type="radio"/> E
e. Write short answers (a paragraph or less) to questions	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input type="radio"/> C	<input type="radio"/> D	<input type="radio"/> E
f. Write a report	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input type="radio"/> C	<input type="radio"/> D	<input type="radio"/> E
g. Work on a group project	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input type="radio"/> C	<input type="radio"/> D	<input type="radio"/> E
h. Give a report on the topic being studied	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input type="radio"/> C	<input type="radio"/> D	<input type="radio"/> E
i. Watch movies, videos, or filmstrips	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input type="radio"/> C	<input type="radio"/> D	<input type="radio"/> E
j. Take a test or quiz	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input type="radio"/> C	<input type="radio"/> D	<input type="radio"/> E
k. Go on field trips or have outside speakers	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input type="radio"/> C	<input type="radio"/> D	<input type="radio"/> E
l. Schoolwork in the library	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input type="radio"/> C	<input type="radio"/> D	<input type="radio"/> E

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VB598168

5. This year in school, how often have you been asked to write long answers to questions or assignments for history or social studies?
- Ⓐ Never
  - Ⓑ Once or twice this year
  - Ⓒ Once or twice a month
  - Ⓓ At least once a week

VB598169

6. How often do you use computers at school for history or social studies?
- Ⓐ Never or hardly ever
  - Ⓑ Once every few weeks
  - Ⓒ About once a week
  - Ⓓ Two or three times a week
  - Ⓔ Every day

VB598176

7. When you study history or social studies, to what extent do you use computers to do research projects about history or social studies topics using a CD or the Internet? Include both work in class and homework assignments.
- Ⓐ Not at all
  - Ⓑ Small extent
  - Ⓒ Moderate extent
  - Ⓓ Large extent

VB595182

8. How hard was this test compared to most other tests you have taken this year in school?
- Ⓐ Easier than other tests
  - Ⓑ About as hard as other tests
  - Ⓒ Harder than other tests
  - Ⓓ Much harder than other tests

VC034559

9. How hard did you try on this test compared to how hard you tried on most other tests you have taken this year in school?
- Ⓐ Not as hard as on other tests
  - Ⓑ About as hard as on other tests
  - Ⓒ Harder than on other tests
  - Ⓓ Much harder than on other tests

VB595184

10. How important was it to you to do well on this test?
- Ⓐ Not very important
  - Ⓑ Somewhat important
  - Ⓒ Important
  - Ⓓ Very important

